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President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20502

Dear President Obama,

I write today with increasing concern over reports of sexual assault and domestic violence in the military.

Studies from the military services and news reports suggest that the rate of sexual assault in the military is unconscionably high, and that as many as 1 in 3 military women experience sexual assault during their career in the service. While pushes to improve oversight of sexual assault policy with the Department of Defense have improved over the past few years, this problem persists and must be addressed. Reports from the Government Accountability Office suggest that the Department still has difficulty in tracking and reporting domestic violence cases and has inconsistent practices in addressing these cases. These crimes are serious threats to the victims affected as well as the morale and readiness of our nation's troops.

I recently introduced H.R. 1517, the Holley Lynn James Act, in the hopes of improving the oversight of sexual assault and domestic violence policy in the Department of Defense. While I will continue to work to enact these provisions through the legislative process, I believe many of the needed changes to policy to improve the treatment of sexual assault and domestic violence can be enacted through executive order or internal policy changes.

Notably, I believe that changes need to be made to the military judicial system to ensure that charges of sexual assault and domestic violence are treated seriously and that the rights of victims are protected and represented through access to privileged counsel. I encourage you to look at the policies in place within the Department of Defense and work to change the culture that continues to be unable to address these challenges to achieve better equality for all of our service members.

I look forward to your response, and thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Bruce Braley  
Member of Congress